



Members of the Coosa County Forestry Planning Committee

MILESTONE:

Coosa County Attains 100 TREASURE Forests

By Joel D. Glover, Wildlife Biologist, Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

An historic accomplishment was recently recognized by the Alabama Natural Resource Council with the presentation of a plaque to the Coosa County Forestry Planning Committee, acknowledging that the county had reached a milestone by having over 100 certified TREASURE Forests. Reaching 100 TREASURE Forests is a significant accomplishment when you consider the fact that some counties have very few TREASURE Forests. This statistic often prompts the question . . . why do some counties have so many TREASURE Forests while others have so few? The answer is, there are many factors involved; however, there are some keys to success.

According to C.W. Moody, former State Forester and chief architect of the TREASURE Forest program, TREASURE Forest was developed to pull together natural resource agency person-

nel to provide multiple-use management guidance for landowners, as well as to recognize landowners who manage their property for multiple-use. This is how the program works in Coosa County: agency resource professionals, forestry and wildlife consultants, forest industry personnel, and private landowners work side by side in the Coosa County Forestry Planning Committee (CCFPC). Active for over 20 years, the mission of the committee is to educate landowners and youth concerning the proper management of our natural resources. The TREASURE Forest program has proven to be an excellent vehicle for fulfilling this objective.

Raymond Shaw, Helene Mosley Winner and longtime member of the CCFPC, once commented during a planning committee meeting that every cause needs a champion. A champion can be defined in many ways; however, Mr. Shaw spoke of a champion as an ardent

supporter. In Coosa County, the members of the CCFPC “champion” the TREASURE Forest program. The members accomplish this by staying on the lookout for TREASURE Forest candidates. Whether the landowner is a client of a consultant, or is seeking management guidance or cost-share assistance, each member realizes every forestland owner interested in managing his or her property is a potential TREASURE Forest landowner. The path to TREASURE Forest is different for every landowner.

Whether landowners have developed their property on their own or through the use of resource professionals prior to hearing about TREASURE Forest, the program was not designed to find and recognize only those people who were already practicing good management. The major intent was to provide technical guidance and education to people

(Continued on page 14)

TREASURE Forest Milestone

(Continued from page 13)

who could in turn put their knowledge into action on the ground. Although we occasionally find a landowner who is ready for certification, the most common scenario is where we meet a landowner, ascertain their objectives, make recommendations, and then facilitate the management of the property.

One important factor leading to the success of the program: the landowner is not told what to do on his or her property. Landowners choose their objectives; then they are offered recommendations to help them reach those goals. Virtually everyone's path to TREASURE Forest starts at a different point. While some landowners are well on their way when they come to our attention, others are starting with a blank slate. Depending on the enthusiasm and ability of the landowner to put recommendations into practice, the process may take only a few months or a few years. We have found this method of growing TREASURE Forest to be very effective. There is a tremendous sense of accomplishment for all involved when watching a property being transformed from a non-productive condition to one of meeting and exceeding the landowners expectations.

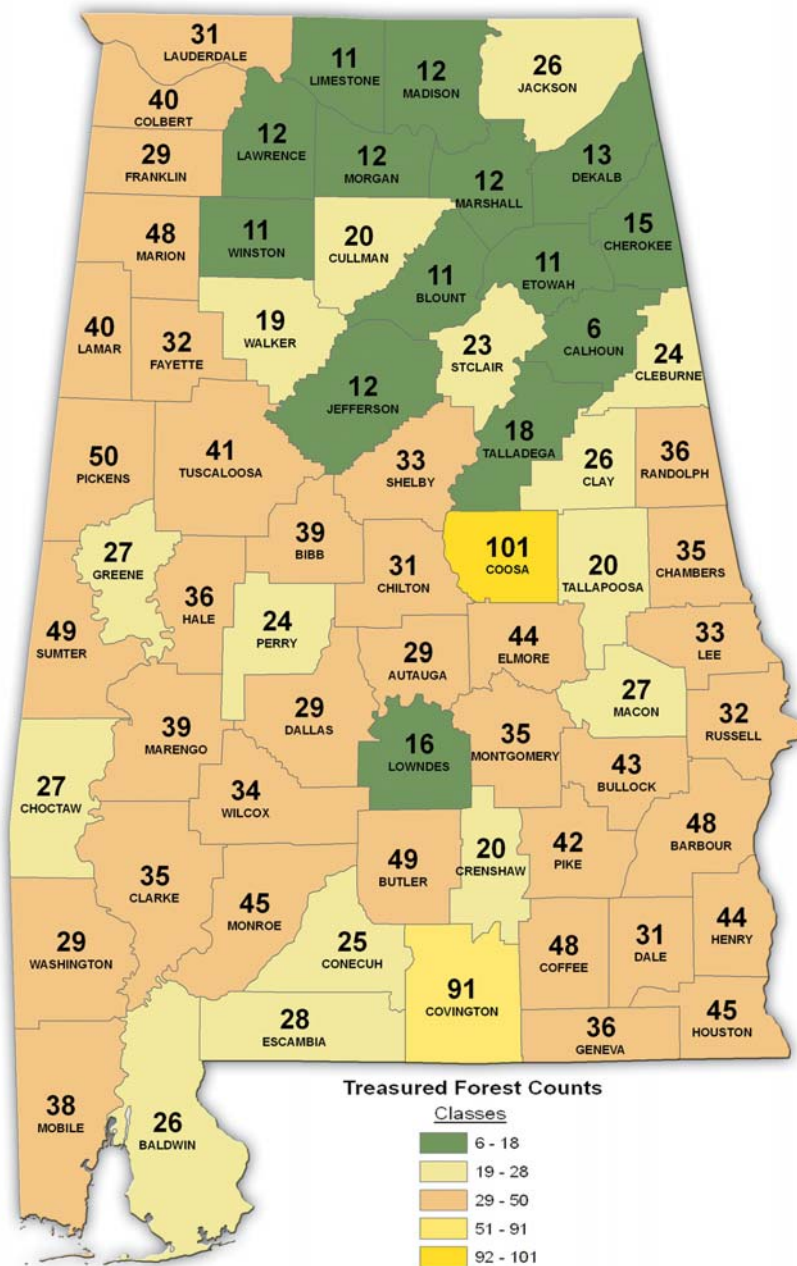
While actively seeking TREASURE Forest candidates, we routinely find landowners who need to begin with a stewardship plan. Many stewardship forests are TREASURE Forests waiting to happen. While stewardship is often an introduction to forest management, TREASURE Forest certification is multiple-use resource management with an exclamation mark at the end! Stewardship is not a competitor for TREASURE Forest, as much as a stepping stone toward it. With most conscientious landowners, there is a natural progression from Stewardship toward TREASURE.

While the members of the CCFPC champion the TREASURE Forest program, the true champions are the landowners who put the recommendations into practice thereby improving their property, their community, and Alabama as a whole. In addition to being champions *in* the program, these

landowners are also great champions of the program. Our TREASURE Forest landowners are often the source of many other candidates. Agency professionals can talk with a landowner until they are blue in the face and still not have them put the recommendations into practice. However, when a friend, neighbor, or relative tells them they have implemented a

practice and it worked, the landowner is then often very receptive.

Most of the TREASURE Forest landowners in Coosa County are in some type of relationship with one another. TREASURE Forest ownership is very much a family thing. Each year the CCFPC hosts our TREASURE Forest Landowner banquet where the highlight of the evening is recognition of newly



certified landowners. Almost without fail, Forester Blake Kelley and I are joined not only by the landowner, but by their entire family for the awarding of their certificate. It does our hearts good to see multiple-use property management linking generations together and building a land ethic.

Aldo Leopold once said the danger in not living on a farm was thinking that food comes from the grocery and heat from the furnace. I feel this accurately reflects the attitude of many people today. This is especially true with children. A recent Kaiser Family Foundation study found the average American child spends 44 hours per week staring at some kind of electronic screen. An author recently diagnosed the youth of today as suffering from "nature deficit disorder." I believe many adults suffer from this as well. When people do not understand the importance of our natural resources, they also do not understand the need to protect them.

This past year's devastating drought is an excellent example. Alabama spent the year in a tussling match with Georgia and Florida over who would get water. It was evident from many news reports that

some areas felt they were somehow "owed" the water they needed to meet their needs. This reflects a mentality that does not understand that natural resources must be protected and conserved. Many people do not understand that water does not originate in the tap. This idea does not set well with today's "I want it now" ideology. TREASURE Forest landowners who are willing to share their property with friends and family are helping to bridge the gap and develop a land ethic in others. Forest landowners understand, we are all part of one ecosystem and we must each do our part to protect it.

Knowing the relationship nature of the TREASURE Forests in Coosa County, I can tell you that having over 100 certified properties reaches a lot of people, people who have an appreciation for the land and want to see it properly managed. I can't help but believe that was what Mr. Moody and others had in mind when they put the TREASURE Forest program in place. TREASURE Forest is a way of life. It's about making your property the best it can be.

So what is the secret to TREASURE Forest certification? It starts with some-

one recognizing a candidate and explaining the program to them. Thomas Edison observed, "Opportunity is missed by most people, because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work!" Having properties certified as TREASURE Forests requires work. There is no way around that. However, like most work, it pays dividends that are worth the effort. In Coosa County, TREASURE Forest certifications are the result of a joint effort. Each member of the committee works toward the goal of certifying landowners. We meet landowners where they are currently and provide them with the information and assistance needed to reach their goals. This, combined with the landowner's efforts has proven to be a good recipe for success. Henry Kaiser remarked, "When your work speaks for itself, don't interrupt."

Therefore, I will sum things up by saying that in most cases, when I assist a landowner and see them progress and eventually merit certification, I receive the blessing. So maybe we have a selfish motive for working on TREASURE Forests . . . perhaps we just like being blessed! ☸

Man Gets 21 Years for Stealing Trees

By *Dennis Sherer* of the *Times Daily*, Florence, AL - Reprinted with Permission

(Published November 09, 2007)

Lauderdale County Circuit Court Judge Mike Jones chastised Charles Calvin Moore before sentencing him Thursday to 21 years in prison for stealing trees. "Mr. Moore, you are a thief," Jones said after reading a list of prior convictions against the 44-year-old Rogersville man.

In September, a Lauderdale jury convicted Moore of one count of first-degree theft and one count of second-degree theft after witnesses testified he hired a Shoals logging company to cut trees on land near Waterloo that he did not own. Jones sentenced Moore to 21 years on each charge, with the sentences to run concurrently. He also ordered Moore to

pay \$20,666 in restitution, the amount Mike Lanier, a law enforcement specialist for the Alabama Forestry Commission, had testified during the trial that the illegally cut trees from the 12-acre tract were worth. Moore was arrested in 2006 and charged with two counts of first-degree theft. At Thursday's hearing, Moore cried as he asked Jones to spare him from prison so he could earn money for paying the restitution. "I'd like to get work release so I could pay those people back," he said. Mauriel Summerhill, an owner of the property where the trees were cut, told Jones she would like to be paid for the stolen trees, but she also wanted Moore

sent to prison as part of his punishment. "He should serve some time to give him an opportunity to think about what he has done to us," Summerhill said.

Will Powell, chief assistant district attorney, asked Jones to impose a lengthy prison sentence. Defense attorney Billy Jackson, of Florence, argued that if Moore were sent to prison, he would be unable to repay his victims for the trees. After the hearing, Summerhill said she was satisfied with the sentence, but would have preferred the sentences be served one after the other. "I think he should have got 42 years," she said.

As a habitual offender, Moore could have been sentenced to life in prison. ☸